RESTORATION *Review*

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THE ROLE OF JOHN T. JOHNSON IN THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

THE CHURCH OF BILLIE SOL ESTES

I feel the spirit of evangelizing burning within me.—JOHN T. JOHNSON

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RESTORATION *Review*

A Quarterly Journal of Philosophy of Restoration

Dedicated to the Task of Defining the
Restoration of Primitive Christianity as the
Spiritual, Moral and Intellectual Ideal of

Modern Man

LEROY GARRETT, *Editor*
CLINT EVANS, *Publisher*

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THE CHURCH OF BILLIE SOL ESTES

The Billie Sol Estes case has brought considerable free publicity to Pecos, Texas, the Department of Agriculture, and the Church of Christ. Several national magazines have publicized that Billie Sol is not only a member of the Church of Christ, but that he is an elder in said church, and that he has strict views on such matters as mixed bathing and dancing. Senator Yarborough of Texas stated that Estes had been in touch with his Washington office several times in an effort to secure passage for Church of Christ missionaries into Africa.

News media have also revealed that not only has the Pecos Church of Christ benefitted from liberal gifts from Estes, but that the minister of the congregation was the recipient of a new Cadillac. Should a minister or a church keep gifts paid for by Estes while government workers are required to give up their positions for receiving gifts from him?

Let the gifts be as they will, there is no question but that Billie Sol has presented the Church of Christ to millions of Americans, however dubious this kind of advertising may be. As in the case of President Kennedy, it is well known what church Estes belongs to. It is not clear just what our people think about the image Estes has created, for the Church of Christ press is conspicuously silent about it all.

While Secretary Freeman of the Department of Agriculture and the city fathers of Pecos show every sign of embarrassment, it is not apparent that the church of Billie Sol is either embarrassed or chagrined. It takes some measure of maturity for one to be humbled and saddened by the sins that transpire at his own doorstep and within his own circle. It requires a maturity that Israel did not have in the time of Jeremiah the prophet. He said of the people: “Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush.” (Jer. 6:15)

Israel was willing for her prophets to condemn the sins of others. Amos was orthodox so long as he condemned the transgressions of Damascus, Tyre, and Moab, but once he “set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel” he was in for trouble. He was told: “Do

not prophesy against Israel, and do not preach against the house of Isaac" (Amos 7:16). Whenever he turned from the "sects" to criticize his own people, he was told to go elsewhere. The idea was that "we are right" and "we are the kingdom of God," so don't criticize us (Amos 7:12-13). Thus Amos had good reason to pronounce a woe upon those "who are at ease in Zion, and those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria" (6:1).

It would be a good guess that Church of Christ ministers could (and some no doubt *would)* have used Billie Sol as an illustration of apostasy had he been a Baptist. It is always open season on the Baptists! And isn't it just like those Baptists to argue that "once in grace always in grace," and then produce the like of Billie Sol Estes! Or it is the kind of thing you'd expect from the Catholics!

This journal has sought in recent issues to show that we have no reason to think ourselves more righteous than anybody else. Not only should we withdraw the claim of being the *only* Christians and *the* New Testament church, but we need to confess our sinfulness and inadequacy just as every religious communion should. We too are sinners saved by grace; we too have much to learn from others. And we too have a large measure of wickedness in our midst. Once we think in these terms we will be less proud and more humble, and we will then know how to blush.

Jeremiah told the people they would be brought to judgment for saying "I have not sinned" and because they "refused to be ashamed" (Jer. 2:35, 3:3). This journal does not intend unkindness when it points out that the sins of our people are as enormous as those we label *the sects.* Not only are we as sectarian as anybody else (we are *first* in internal divisions and squabbles), but we have every form of wickedness amongst us. We like to forget that a minister of an Illinois congregation left his wife one night to do "personal work," but instead he parked at a super market until a woman returned from her shopping; then at knife point forced her into his car, drove to a secluded spot where he raped her. The very next night he used a similar plan in raping a second woman. He is most fortunate to be spending *his* life at the state penitentiary at Joliet. Those of "the world" showed him more mercy than he showed to two innocent women. Otherwise he would have paid with his life. He *is* a graduate of one of our Christian colleges.

Another Church of Christ minister, also a product of one of our citadels of righteousness, wasted his substance at the dice tables in Las Vegas, having been introduced to them by some of the members of his Dallas congregation. He then turned to robbery in an effort to regain the losses sustained by his wealthy family. After joining thugs who hijacked a supermarket or two, he was sent to the penitentiary. We are happy to report that the poor, misled brother has recently been released to the care of his father and is finding his way back to a constructive life.

Not only have we too produced thugs, murderers, rapists — and now Billie Sol Estes — but we too have our share of rebellious children, broken homes, prudish husbands, wayward wives, pride, arrogance, self-righteousness, adultery, willful ignorance, faction, degeneracy, partyism, downright dishonesty and all the rest. And we know almost nothing about personal discipline, private prayer and meditation, family devotions, and self-exploration. For a people that makes the fantastic claim of being the only true church we need to take a second look at our brand of righteousness. We are more famous for our condemnation of others than for our benevolence; we appear more eager to build up our own party at home and abroad than to alleviate human suffering.

It may well be that Billie Sol Estes is what we would call a pretty good fellow. No doubt he can justify himself in his own mind. It may have been his intention to do a lot of good with his money (or the other fellow's money), and it is probable that he never intended to hurt anyone or to defraud anyone. After all, some business men see only a fine line between being shrewd and smart and being unethical. To many business men in Estes' kind of world Billie Sol's sin was in getting caught. And how many never get caught?

We are willing to leave Estes' judgment with the courts and with God. It is the *church* of Billie Sol Estes that concerns me in this case, for I am suspicious that the apparent *thinking* of Billie Sol relative to right and wrong is rather typical of Church of Christ people. Perhaps I should say it is typical of *all* religious people who so stress externality as to neglect spirituality. It is the sad story of the Pharisees who "neglected the weightier matters of the law" in an effort to be right about everything external.

It is much more likely that the Roman Catholics or the Church of Christ would produce a Billie Sol than say the Quakers. I cannot think of an infamous Quaker, though it might please some to name Richard Nixon or Drew Pearson. The Quakers are known around the world as peacemakers. They would hardly know how to behave at some of the church squabbles that we have. They are known for their humble, simple lives and their generosity to the depressed and the poor of the world. The "image" of the Quaker is one of poverty of spirit. But what is the "image" of the Church of Christ member? Is it not one of straight-laced austerity? Are we not known as people who think we're right and everybody else is wrong? And are we not better known for what we are *against* than what we are *for?* Those who know us well know that we have almost nothing to do with any other church, that we are exclusivists of the first order. I fear that our "image" includes arrogance and self-righteousness. To say the least, we are hardly recognized for our humility!

The image that the people of Pecos had of Billie Sol *before* his sudden rise to infamy was not unlike the picture that many people have of Church of Christ folk. He was a man who used his money and influence to conform everyone else to his own way of thinking. The press stories reveal that when a school dance was scheduled, Estes would have a party at his plush home in order to keep the kids off the dance floor. He ran for a place on the

school board with the intention of banning dancing in the schools. He tried to keep a cold drink vending machine out of the school gym so as to discourage the students from gathering and dancing. A Pecos housewife was quoted as saying: “For him to run most of the businesses in town is one thing, but it is something else when he tries to control the lives of our children.”

Amidst all this concern for dancing and mixed bathing he was engaged in practices that led to his arrest by federal authorities. Not only fraudulent business methods, but even the possibility of murder has become a part of the larger Estes scandal. What kind of thinking is *it* that can cause a man to compartmentalize his mind so that he is at the same time so religious that he will not dance and so irregular in his business dealings as to be arrested for fraud?

It is an oversimplification to say that such a man is just another hypocrite. Surely Estes was sincere in his opposition to dancing and mixed bathing. And could he not have been conscientious in his role of elder in the Pecos Church of Christ even while these questionable practices were going on? It may well be the story of the poor Pharisees all over again. They could leave an ox wounded in a ditch, flog a disciple of Jesus, slap an apostle, and even consign men to death, and at the same time pray for God’s blessings upon their conduct. When one becomes enmeshed in the externality of religion, his sense of values can become confused and he can violate basic moral principles with no sense of inconsistency.

I know a young lady (a Church of Christ girl, incidentally) who went to college with Billie Sol’s view of worldliness. It was soon known among the student body that this girl not only objected to smoking and drinking, but she did not dance or even attend a movie. But she soon gained quite a reputation for her highly questionable conduct with boys on dates.

Then there is a fellow Church of Christ editor who named his little church paper the same name this journal wears. I wrote him a kind letter in which I explained that since my journal was already in its second year and his was but beginning he would not only show courtesy by selecting another name, but that he would avoid confusion for us all in doing so. I pointed out that I had first decided on *Restoration Quarterly* for my journal, but before I issued the first number, some brethren in Abilene started a journal by that name. So as a matter of journalistic ethics as well as Christian courtesy, not to mention my interest in avoiding confusion, I modified the name.

My editor friend wrote back that since he did not recognize my journal as loyal he would not be able to honor my request. It is the Jesuit doctrine that error has no rights. Ethical principles do not apply in the case of apostates. The president of Freed-Hardeman College a few years ago put a fellow disciple in jail — and then prayed about it in a public

meeting the same night! Did not Jesus teach his disciples that men would put them to death thinking they were doing God's service?

If our people can get so mad that they will not speak to a brother when he turns premillennial or anti-Herald of Truth, vilify each other in our journals, go to law over church property, put each other in jail, excommunicate each other over differing opinions, boycott each other — *and we do all these things* — and then go right on with our *loyal* "five acts of worship" fully convinced that we are pets of heaven, then we should have no difficulty in understanding the mind of Billie Sol Estes.

Though there are, thank God, many exceptions, I think we can refer to "the Church of Christ mind." That mind cannot truly entertain a new idea. Can you fancy a Bible study in a typical Church of Christ where a brother would feel free to say: "That reminds me of an article by Carl Ketcherside that I read the other day. It suggested another answer to this question . . ."? The "Church of Christ mind" has its many keep-off-the-grass signs. Like the oceans, it knows that it can go so far but no further. Not only is it not free, it is also blind. It is the mind that will go petting with the boys, but not dare go to a dance; it is the mind that has one ethic for the loyal and another for digressives; it is the mind that will preach the Golden Rule and then turn and imprison a brother or not speak to him because of his change of position.

It would be unfair to call it a hypocritical mind, for our people in the main are sincere. But it is fair to call it a stereotyped mind, the mind of conformity. Laboring under a misunderstanding of such scriptures as I Cor. 1:10 ("All of you speak the same thing . . . be of the same mind and same judgment") and Amos 3:3 ("How can two walk together except they be agreed"), the "Church of Christ mind" is obsessed with conformity. Everyone must see alike in matters of doctrine or there can be no unity. Supposing unity to be *oneness of opinion,* our people demand conformity when they think they are pleading for unity.

They thus confuse fellowship and endorsement, supposing that fellowship is not possible until there can be an endorsement of one another's points of view. This is the great fallacy of Church of Christ thinking. Therefore a brother is not recognized because he uses an organ in the worship, or perhaps he believes in an earthly reign of Christ or any other idea that does not conform to Church of Christ orthodoxy. And so when differences over Herald of Truth and benevolent institutions become sufficiently distinct it was necessary that another brotherhood be started. The Church of Christ mind thus becomes stereotyped. Brethren must be carbon copies of each other, *loyal* to a creed that is no less real because it is unwritten.

Since conformity can best be tested by externals, fellowship ro the Church of Christ mind is determined primarily by *things* — and so in the short history of the Church of Christ divisions have risen over communion cups, organ, colleges, classes, societies,

institutions, radio programs. This is new in discipledom. Up until the Civil War and after the Disciples were not divisive, breaking up into various "loyal churches" over differences. Despite their differences, including severe feelings about slavery and the War, they never divided. The reason is simple: *they did not confuse fellowship for endorsement.* They understood that a brother might be wrong about many things and still be in the fellowship of the saints (Romans 14:1).

When religion accents externals it tends to be rigid and legalistic. By *rigid* I mean it is unbending and inflexible, allowing no space for the mind's growth except in predetermined channels. The rigid mind must have sideboards so that it will not venture astray. By *legalistic* I mean that party interpretations are made the absolute, infallible word of God. The verse referred to above, Amos 3:3, is for example a *party* interpretation when it is made to mean that two men cannot enjoy fellowship with each other or be together in religious worship unless they are agreed doctrinally. One only needs to read the passage in more than one version, or simply read the context, to see that Amos is making no reference whatever to unity or fellowship. They are *many* party interpretations made by our people.

As the mind grows legalistic and rigid (and sometimes *frigid* too) it is easy for it to tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and neglect the weightier matters of the law. It becomes less difficult for a mind like Billie Sol Estes to rationalize his wheeling and dealing so long as he remains loyal to the externals. If one belongs to the true church and is faithful to "the five acts" it is easier for him to believe that the end justifies the means. Moral principles can sometimes be blurred even though the externals shine brightly. Too often loyalty to the externals provide a false security.

The case of Billie Sol is a tragic one. Let us hope that he will come through this experience a better man. It is a far greater tragedy if we as a people are creating stereotyped minds in a world that needs free minds. Tyranny over the minds of men is worse than fraud.

Billie Sol's case is further confused by the fact that some of the leaders of the Broadway Church of Christ in Lubbock are implicated. While it seems that one brother merely was unfortunate enough to have innocently loaned Estes money for his deals, one of the elders at Broadway heads a manufacturing concern that claimed to have manufactured and delivered fertilizer tanks for Estes. The elder's company issued statements that the tanks were delivered!

But I still say that tyranny over the human mind is worse than fraud, and that is at Broadway too! We just might have an interesting story to tell along that line someday — one that will curl your hair!

IS FAITH DOCTRINAL OR PERSONAL?

The *Firm Foundation* is to be commended for conducting a kind of "open forum" on the question as to whether we should preach the Man or the Plan. Numerous articles appeared on the subject, most of them arguing that we are to preach *both* Jesus and the plan of salvation. The writers differed mostly on where the emphasis should be, some insisting that the apostles preached Jesus, leaving *the plan* to follow in due course. Others contended that Jesus cannot be preached without preaching the plan, and that the plan is indeed to be stressed.

Editor Lemmons injected this question into the exchange: *how can one preach Jesus without emphasizing the plan?* I think no one pointed him to Acts 2 where Peter did that very thing. The record makes it clear that Peter proclaimed the gospel to the men of Israel, the conclusion of which was "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." The gospel had been preached without a word about any *plan* or "five steps to salvation." Yea, not even a word about baptism! Why? Because there is a difference between *the gospel* and the *terms* by which one accepts the gospel.

Peter preached the gospel — the *full* gospel — on the day of Pentecost, but he said nothing about the *terms* of the gospel until he was asked. Suppose he had not been asked? There is no reason to think that he would have said anything about baptism. It appears from Acts 13:16-41 that Paul preached the gospel when no inquiry was made as to how to obey it, and so he says nothing about baptism or any plan. Yet he preached the gospel! He proclaimed a *Person,* and when that love story was told as to what God has done for sinful man through the Christ, it often aroused response from honest and good hearts. Once they believed in the Person, it was time enough to point out the terms of response.

A man hears "that his name was drawn for the new Cadillac that was given away by the super market. This is *good news* or *gospel.* He made no response to this good news, if he reacted in no way to indicate his acceptance, he would never receive the new car. But he nonetheless heard the good news — *all* the good news there was to tell! Most men would of course respond by making inquiry as to what procedures should be followed. The information such a one would receive relative to papers to be signed or taxes to be paid in order to get the Cadillac is quite different from the good news that his name was drawn.

This is why this journal insists that Billy Graham is a gospel preacher even if he does not make clear the terms of pardon. If Graham preaches the risen Christ, he preaches the gospel. If he tells God's love story that through the sacrifice of Christ man has victory over sin, he preaches the gospel — the *full* gospel. We readily admit that he errs in not stating the terms of acceptance as did Peter in Acts 2:38.

The question of "the Man or the Plan" is confused in part by the notion that the gospel embraces all the New Testament scriptures. Our people are slow to discern the important distinction between *didache* (doctrine) and *kerugma* (gospel message). In I Cor. 2:3 the apostle refers to *the message* (kerugma) he proclaimed to the Corinthians; he describes this as the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in I Cor. 15:1-4. He refers to it as "the thing preached" in I Cor. 1:21. Surely *the thing preached* is one thing, while all his instructions on the saintly life such as we have throughout the Corinthian correspondence is something else.

Paul himself shows the difference (in I Cor. 4:15: "Though you have (countless guides (teachers) in Christ you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel." Paul *beget* then: by the gospel message; they were further instructed by many teachers. If Philip. 1:8 he speaks of "the defense and confirmation of the gospel." Is it not one thing to preach the gospel and another to "defend" it?

There is Paul's remark in Gal. 3:8 that "God preached *the gospel* beforehand unto Abraham, saying, 'In thee shall all the nations be blessed'" The gospel is a specific message, one that can be made known in comparatively few words. It was only eight words (in English translation) in the case of Abraham. It took only a few words for John the Baptist to proclaim the gospel at its preparatory level: "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." It is interesting that Luke 3:18 distinguishes between John's gospel message and the exhortations that accompanied the message.

If these conclusions are warranted, we may affirm that apostolic *preaching* was centered in a Person, not a *plan,* In the case of the eunuch in Acts 8, it was a "He" that puzzled him — the "He" that Isaiah had anticipated in prophecy. And it was this "He" that Philip preached about. The eunuch's request for baptism shows that the evangelist made some reference to the *one act* of immersion as he spoke of the gospel, which is, of course symbolically expressed in immersion. The important point is that Philip's message was personal.

FAITH AS PERSONAL

Some suppose that Christian faith is *doctrinal,* but we regard it as *personal.* One is saved when he believes heaven's grand proposition that *Jesus is the Christ,* which is the gospel, and responds to that message by being immersed. Salvation is not dependent upon *knowledge* of certain doctrines but *faith* in a certain Person. It is not a matter of how much he knows or does not know about the Bible, but upon what he *believes* about the Christ. One may be wholly ignorant of such a device as "the five steps in the plan of salvation" and yet yield himself to the Person of the Christ "through faith in the working of God" (Col. 2:12).

We repeat our often stated avowal: when one believes *one fact* that Jesus is the Christ and obeys the *one act* of immersion into the Christ, he becomes a saint of God. Never mind what he knows or does not know about the church, the doctrine of baptism, steps of salvation, or what have you. Never mind how right or wrong he may be on prophecy, music in the church, institutionalism, eternal security, or what have you. He is a saint. He is my brother. If he happens to end up in a sect in his confused search for more and more light, including the "Church of Christ" sect, he is still a Christian, still my brother, and we are in fellowship with each other.

One mark of sectarianism is that it regards Christian faith as an assent to a particular set of tenets, and one is not true to "the faith" unless he conforms to the sect's own interpretations. Faith is a simple and loving trust in Jesus the Christ. It means to love him and to seek to conform one's life after his purity and holiness. Being truly faithful means to love Jesus with all one's personality.

A man may have this kind of faith and yet be wrong about many *doctrinal* matters. He is not "unfaithful" if he happens to believe premillenialism or if he thinks instrumental music all right, unless these views in some way indicated that he did not truly love the Christ.

It is inconceivable to me that a man could be lost who loves God with all his heart and trusts in the Christ as his Lord, irrespective of doctrinal errors in his thinking. It begs the question to argue that if one trusts in the Lord he will obey all his commandments, and then to proceed to list those doctrines that receive special emphasis from some religious group. Yes, a true believer in Jesus *will* obey his commandments. Jesus says that. But one must *understand* the doctrines before he can obey them, which calls for much Christian growth. What shall we do with him in the meantime? Will we wait until he grows to the level that he interprets all scripture as we do before we enjoy fellowship with him? Shall we reject him as a brother because he *now* does not understand doctrine as we do?

In the *Firm Foundation* exchange referred to above, Frank Lilly writes the following about some "modernist" he heard in Abilene: "He also said he could attend a sectarian meeting and join right in and fellowship them in their singing with their instrumental music, and still not endorse them in what they were doing. I asked him how he could fellowship a thing and still not endorse it. He did not answer."

Let me answer for the brother. I do not fellowship *things.* Fellowship is between persons, based upon their mutual relationship to Jesus the Christ. Instrumental music has nothing at all to do with Christian fellowship. True, one might not *endorse* the use of an organ in worship, but this is different from the fellowship between saints of God who happen to have different opinions about the organ. So, brother Lilly, I can have fellowship with the *brother* while I do not endorse the *thing.* Let us not confuse fellowship and endorsement. In Rom. 14 the brethren did not *endorse* each other's positions about dietary

doctrines, but Paul taught them to receive or fellowship each other. This means that while I may not *endorse* premillenialism, I can nonetheless enjoy communion or fellowship with the premillennialist.

Our chief point is this: Christian faith is centered in a Person. This comes from belief in testimony of what God has done through Christ. This is the gospel. When men share this precious faith that *Jesus is Lord* they are in fellowship with each other because they are *in Christ* together. *Doctrine* (the apostles' teaching) is something basically different, which means it has no necessary relationship to *the faith.* The faith that saves is the faith that believes and obeys *the gospel,* not all the doctrines or teachings of the New Testament. *Doctrine* is rather related to Christian growth and perfection. Fellowship is between persons who have believed and obeyed the gospel, but who at the same time may differ greatly on matters of doctrine. It is the *gospel* that puts us in fellowship with each other, not conformity on *doctrine*.

IS THE NAME "CHRISTIAN" DIVINELY APPOINTED?

In the March issue of *20th Century Christian* Hugo McCord has an article on why the Church of Christ does not have a written creed. This journal would like to see an article on why the Church of Christ *does* have an *unwritten* creed! One facet of this unwritten creed is that the name *Christian* is to be worn as a God-given name. Being scriptural and God-ordained, it is *the* distinctive name for the Lord's people, while such names as Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian are *human* names and therefore sinful and divisive. This is the Church of Christ creed.

A statement by Leroy Brownlow in *Why I Am a Member of the Church of Christ* is typical: "We find in the Bible that the disciples were called Christians, but we never read of any person being called some hyphenated Christian. Regardless of what names others wear, I prefer to stick to the Bible and be a Christian only." Brother Brownlow goes on to set up some rather novel syllogisms, such as: 1. The Bible condemns human names (I Cor. 1:12, 13); 2. The name "Lutheran" is a human name; 3. Therefore, the name "Lutheran" is under condemnation.

Another syllogism goes this way: 1. Man is commanded to glorify God in the name "Christian" (1. Pet. 4:16); 2. Catholics are trying to glorify God in the name "Catholic"; 3. Therefore, Catholics are in disobedience to the command of God.

It would disturb a person of brother Brownlow's persuasion to entertain the idea that "Christians" may also be a human name, and that it is no more ordained by God than is the name Lutheran or Catholic. It is furthermore possible for the name "Christian" to be a party name, equally as divisive and sectarian as Methodist or Baptist.

Brother Brownlow is too sure of his position when he writes: "After Paul had preached to King Agrippa the king exclaimed, 'With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian' (Acts 26:28). This is what Paul tried to get every person to become and be."

Where is the evidence for such a claim? The truth is Paul did not once use the name Christian in all his writings; nor did he ever refer to himself by such a name. He *never* tried to get anyone to wear the name insofar as the Bible reveals. Even in the case alluded to by brother Brownlow, it was the king and not Paul that made mention of the name. The remarkable fact is that Paul did not accept the name even after the king had used it!

It is stimulating to compare Alexander Campbell's interpretation of Acts 26:28 with that of Church of Christ ministers after the order of Leroy Brownlow:

> It is assumed that Paul admitted it as of divine authority when it fell from the lips of king Agrippa. Paul was not such an admirer of regal grandeur as to hold the words of a king divine; nay, he modestly declined the name in the presence of Agrippa. For when the king said, 'Paul, thou almost persuadest me to be a Christian,' Paul does not say, 'I would to God that not only thou, but all that hear me this day, were not only almost, but altogether *Christians.'* Nay, verily, he says, 'altogether such as I am, except these chains.' The reason was then what it is now. The enemies of Christ desired to put him on a footing with Plato, Pythagoras, Aristotle, and other philosophic and political aspirants, heads of parties, leaders, and thus to place his religion and his party on a par with others according to the ruling custom of the age; by which they hoped to humble his pretensions and exalt their own.

Campbell concludes by saying: "The apostles, therefore, as appears from all their writings, never once adopted the name. They call themselves and one another by numerous and various names, but never by that name:' (*Mill. Harb*. 11, p. 26)

Brother Brownlow, in traditional Church of Christ fashion, goes to Isaiah 62:2 where he finds that God's people are to be called by "a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name." He shows as follows that this new name from God's own mouth is the name Christian::

> They were not to be given this new name until after the Gentiles had been converted or had seen the righteousness of God. In Acts 10 we read of the conversion of the Gentiles: Cornelius and his household. In the next chapter (Acts 11 :26) we read, "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." This was a new name and it was given after the Gen tiles had seen the righteousness of God. If this is not the new name that was to be given by Jehovah, then tell us what is, please.

Since brother Brownlow wants someone to tell him what name Isaiah was talking about if it were not the name Christian, I think it proper to refer him to a man whose scholarship he respects so highly. Alexander Campbell writes as follows:

> Others again have assumed that Christian is the new name by which God's people were to be called, as intimated in Isaiah 62 :2. But that was in the days of text-preaching when the context had little or nothing to do with the interpretation of any passage: for now all are satisfied that the new name there spoken of is Hepzibah —"the delight of the Lord," or "My delight is in her." But although we are not called upon to prove that this name was not given by divine authority, or friends being obliged to offer proof that it was; we may fearlessly affirm, from all that has recently been written on the subject, and from all that is in the New Testament, that no person can possibly prove that it was divinely introduced or sanctioned. (Mill. Harb. 11, p. 25)

Let us underscore the conclusion that Campbell so fearlessly makes: *No person can possibly prove that the name Christian was divinely introduced or sanctioned.*

For those who are unafraid to think for themselves and let their minds venture beyond the appointed boundaries, I should like to make the following observations relative to the name Christian:

1. If "Christian" was the God-appointed name for his people, why were they 12 or 14 years after Pentecost receiving this name? The Spirit came on Pentecost, directing the apostles into all truth. Why was it over a decade later after many saints had died that the truth concerning this name was finally given?

2. Why does the Holy Spirit never call the disciples Christians, both *before* and *after* Antioch, whether in *Acts* or any other part of the New Testament? Luke wrote *Acts* thirty or forty years after the disciples were called Christians at Antioch. If he believed it to be the God-ordained name, why did not he himself use the term in *Acts?* Even if for some strange reason God did not want the saints designated as Christians until Antioch, why did not Luke thereafter refer to them by that name? In the immediate verses following Acts 11:26 Luke is again calling them disciples, and in the whole length of his history of the primitive church he does not once call them by the name that God had ordained that they should wear! Now, really, does that make sense?

4. Did Luke and other writers of the New Testament scriptures disobey God by their failure to use the God-ordained name? They used the term *disciple* over one hundred times. Terms like *saints, brethren, beloved of God* are used by the writers, some with great frequency. While *Christian* occurs three times, and only three times in the entire New Testament, it is all three times used in reference to *outsiders* applying the name to the disciples.

5. In every instance in the Bible where God designated another name for one that name was immediately appropriated and used regularly and unfailingly from then on. *Abram* was changed to *Abraham* and *Sarai* to *Sarah.* Even *Saul* was consistently called *Paul* once he became an apostle, though this may not have been ordained of God. Could the disciples

have believed that God had given a new name, one anticipated even by the prophets, and yet not have appropriated it?

6. Is *Christ* a name? Is it not Jesus *the Christ,* meaning the Messiah or the Anointed One? If God wanted us to wear his son's name, would it not be Jesus? This is the name God gave to him (Matt. 1:21). He was called "the Christ" because of the character of his work. *Christ is* no more Jesus' name than *Baptist* is John's name.

7. Christ is the Greek term for *Anointed One,* while *Messiah* is the Hebrew form. Would it be as acceptable for a Jewish disciple to be designated a *Messiahist* as for a Gentile disciple to be called Christian?

8. The saints had several nicknames given them by the world, some by derision and some by convenient designation. Nazarenes was not in opprobrium as was *Atheists.* It appears that *Christian* was given by the Antiochians, not in derision or dislike, but simply for identification, just as they would call Plato's disciples *Platonists.*

Johannes *Weiss* in his *Earliest Christianity* (Vol 1, p. 175) puts it this way "They were called Christians by the populace, which wished in this way to fasten on to them a kind of party designation as a nickname; they were called Christ partisans, just as later on names were formed for the heretics: Basilidians, Valentinians, Arians. Here Christ was thought of as a kind of party leader."

9. It may well be that the group at Corinth who avowed "We are of Christ" (1 Cor. 1:12) were as sectarian as those who wished to belong to Paul or Cephas, for all had the spirit of rivalry in view of Paul's language. I am inclined to agree with Alexander Campbell in a statement that would cause the hair of many of my brethren to stand on end: *there is as much intolerance and heresy in contending for the name Christian as for the name Baptist.* (Mill. Harb. 11, p. 363)

It is evident from 1 Pet. 4:16 that the saints were persecuted under the name Christian. This may have reference to legal trials in which the disciples had judgment passed upon them for being Christians. We know from various sources (e. g., Seutonius' letter to the Emperor Trajan) that at an early date it was illegal in the Roman Empire to be a Christian. It may also be the case that by this time the enemies of the gospel used the term in derision, though is should not be concluded that it so originated, nor was it generally at the outset used as an opprobrium.

In the dispute among the Disciple pioneers as to whether the name was divinely appointed, James Challen was led to say: "To suppose that the enemies of Christ gave them this name is simply ridiculous, as no higher compliment could have given than to have bestowed the name upon them. They had called the disciples Nazarenes, Galileans, men of the way, or sect, but never had they called them Christians; and if the enemies of the disciples did not give the name who did." (Lard's Quarterly, 1, p. 390)

Challen overlooked the fact that the name could have been given by *outsiders* who were not enemies, simply as a convenient name of reference. Too, while the term may have first been merely a nickname, it could well have evolved into one of derision as the movement became more hated. This is possible regardless of how precious the ideas might be behind the name Christian to the disciples. It is not true that *Christian* would at first simply suggest one who follows after the Christ, while later in the history of the church it takes on a sublime meaning due to its implication of the character of the Christ? Certainly in the primitive church an outsider, or even an enemy, could refer to the disciples as Christians without any thought of bestowing a *compliment!*

Once a disciple associates the holiness of the Christ with the name, he has a good reason to be reluctant to wear the name himself. Campbell thought that *Disciple,* which means *learner,* is a humbler name and more appropriate. It is interesting that people who hesitate to call themselves *saint* will appropriate the name *Christian* quite boldly.

"*Called" in Acts* 11:26

A lengthy paper could be composed on the history of the controversy in the Restoration Movement regarding *the name we should wear.* It starts as early as 1839 with Alexander Campbell debating the issue in the *Harbinger* with the editors of *The Christian, Heretic Detector,* and *The Evangelist.* As we have seen in the James Challen quotation, it was still a lively topic in the 1864 issue of *Lard's Quarterly.* W. W. Eaton, B. W. Stone, Thomas Campbell, Editor Crihfield, and John T. Johnson got into the act, and everybody, except an occasional obscure reader of the *Harbinger,* was opposed to Campbell's position.

Stone wrote to Campbell just after his initial articles on "Our Name" as follows:

> I am sorry, very sorry, that you have written as you did. I anticipate no good results, but evil. It appears to be uncalled for. We were living in peace and harmony, and the good cause prospering. You well knew the great attachment thousands of us had to the name *Christian,* and many believed from your writing that you had adopted it as the most appropriate name.
>
> You also knew that many could not conscientiously be called *Disciples* as a family name. You knew your two warmest friends, J. T. Johnson and myself rejected the title of our Hymn Book because it was called the Disciples' Hymn Book. Brother Campbell, ought you not to have respected the feelings of so many, who united their energies with *yours* in promoting the common cause? (Mill. Harb. 11, p. 21)

Campbell always made it clear that while *Christian* was an acceptable name with him, he wanted the brethren to refrain from "placing it on the footing of a divine oracle and imposing it on others." It is of *human* origin, Campbell insisted, and therefore "the attempt to impose that name upon all persons as of divine authority" must be resisted.

He directs his remarks to Stone and other critics when he writes:

> Nor were we so ignorant of human nature as to expect that those who have preached a hundred sermons on the — divine and exclusive authority of the name Christian, and wrote a thousand pages, first and last, upon its supernatural charms and sanctions, are to be, all of a sudden, satisfied with any proof that this high and authoritative ground of theirs is neither more nor less than a good-natured and well-meant assumption, of which themselves are not so much the authors as the adopters. (Mill. Harb. 11, p. 23)

The battleground in the discussions that followed was, as one might guess, Acts 11:26: "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." It was argued that *called (chreematisai in Greek)* implies a divine call, and that thereafter were called or named Christians by God through some revelation either to the church at Antioch or through Paul and Barnabas. Campbell at once conceded that if this were true, it would then be proper to insist that all believers accept it as *the* name for the Lord's people.

Campbell was alert to point out that was not his task to prove that "Christian" was of human origin, even though he believed he could, but rather the obligation of his critics to prove the name of divine origin. He was certain this could not be done. In the lengthy exchanges on *called* in Acts 11:26 he argued as follows:

1. The other instances of *chreematisai* in the New Testament do not warrant the interpretation of a divine call: Acts 10:22, Mt. 2:12, Lk. 2:26, Heb. 11:7, Rom. 7:3, Heb. 12:25. He observes that in several of these it is an angel or the Spirit that does the *calling* or *warning*, and this use of the word in reference to agents inferior to God weakens his opponents' position. He quotes Dr. George Campbell (the *Living Oracles* Campbell) that the word in reference to beings inferior to God, and so, to quote the Cambridge scholar, "it does not necessarily imply from God."

2. The use of the term in Rom. 7:3 ("she shall be *called* an adulteress") could hardly mean "She shall, by a revelation from God, be named an adulteress!" It simply means, Campbell argues, that she shall *by law* or by men be so recognized.

3. The most forceful rebuttal is on Heb. 12:25 where there are two words for *speak.* One is *laleo* (the one who *speaks* or *warns* from heaven) and the other is *chreematisai* (the one who speaks or warns on earth). One "warning" is from heaven (Christ); the other from earth (Moses). Campbell shows that more dignity is given to *laleo* (the warning from Christ) than to *chreematisai* (the warning from Moses). If *chreematisai* means to be warned or called by the voice of God, would the writer have used *laleo* in reference to the Christ and *chreematisai* in reference to Moses?

4. Campbell goes on to point out that *laleo* is used "hundreds of times" to express direct communications from God. So with the word *kalleo*, also meaning to *call.* When God bestowed a name, as in the case of *Jesus,* or changed a name, as with *Sarah* and *Israel,* it is *Kalleo* (the Old Testament references of course being from the Septuagint). All

this means that it could be argued with equal force that *laleo* and *kalleo* suggest a divine call as well as *chreematisai.*

5. He then shows that *chreematisai* is from *chreema*, meaning business. When used in the passive voice, as it is in Acts 11:26, it means to name a man after his business. Such has been the case with such names as Baker, Butler, Shoemaker, Taylor.

> Now what can be more natural than that in the great church in the great city of Antioch, in Syria, where there were so many prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and brethren, always preaching about Christ, the Antiochians would *chreematize* them? — that is, give them the name *Christians* from their constant devotion to Christ and talk about him. This is, to my mind the most evident origin of the name, and in the most perfect good keeping with the history and meaning of this litigated word. I shall stand for it on the true history and meaning of the word *chreematizo* against any man in America with all the sacred and profane classics, dictionaries and books that can be assembled from Maine to Georgia. *(Mill. Harb.* 11, p. 372)

6. "Christian" can be made a divisive name. "There are no Christians in heaven — no Jews in heaven — no divisive names in heaven. But there are *saints* in heaven, holy brethren and other designations of great age and of unquestionable divine authority." He then refers to "the new name" that Jesus has promised us in heaven, and he urges all disputants to so live as to be worthy of that new, heavenly name.

This journal hastens to add in conclusion that while it is almost certain that "Christian" is indeed a human name, it is a most appropriate designation for those who sincerely love the Christ and seek to become more like him. We should therefore wear it gladly.

We also conclude that our people should refrain from teaching that "Christian" is the God-appointed name, and thereby chastize other immersed believers who. may not choose to emphasize it as we do. Believing Jews would for instance be justified in rejecting the name.

We agree with Campbell that while "Christian" is a most acceptable *human* name, a *nickname* with which we shall happily glorify God, there are other names that are *divine* in origin which we would give more heed. We are persuaded that *Disciple* (with either a small or capital D) is the most appropriate of all the scriptural denominations as the *unusual* or *most used* name. *Disciple* means of course *Disciple of Christ* which is most expressive of what the saint of God chooses to be in his humble but weak efforts to walk in the way of the Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

DALLAS STUDY NEXT JULY

The Wynnewood Congregation, 2303 S. Tyler in Dallas, is sponsoring a study on unity and fellowship for the week of next July 4. Carl Ketcherside, Darrell Bolin, and Leroy Garrett are already scheduled to take part, and there will be others. Why not plan your vacation so as to be in Dallas at that time?

LOYAL CHURCH?

Many times we have heard it carelessly flung that certain congregations and segments are not the "*true* church—they are not the loyal church." May we now ask just which segment among us is the "loyal one"? In order to answer this we must first answer: "loyal to what?" Every single segment among us has its own unwritten creed, party loyalties, traditions, cliches, shibboleths, badges, standards and tests of doctrinal purity. How then are we going to determine loyalty? Reader, don't reply, "By God's word of course," because that is exactly what each segment among us has parroted for years. All of us think we are speaking as the Bible speaks." — *M. F. Cottrell*

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The Story of 'The Evangelist of Kentucky" . . .

THE ROLE OF JOHN T. JOHNSON IN THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

By Leroy Garrett

The subject of this study once proclaimed the gospel for two full weeks in Richmond, Virginia, without any visible response from his audiences, but as he continued his efforts a few days longer there were 55 additions to the church! It was not unusual for John T. Johnson to immerse 30 or 40, or even 70 or 80 souls during his protracted meetings that would last from a few days to several weeks, depending on the particular need of the locality.

It was just after this Richmond meeting in 1846 that he visited Bethany for the only time in his life, at which time he spent a few days with Alexander Campbell, the old sage with whom he had already shared many thrilling experiences and with whom he was to share many more. Only two years before he was at Campbell's side during the Rice debate

in Lexington, and in 1841 he arranged an important union meeting in the same city in which Campbell was a featured speaker. The two men often traveled together among the churches in several states, but especially during Campbell's frequent visits to Kentucky.

In the next issue of the *Millennial Harbinger* following Johnson's visit, Campbell attempts to account for the success of the evangelist, who in only 15 years had immersed thousands into Christ, and who had earned the reputation among the Disciples as "the Evangelist of Kentucky." Even though most of Bethany's students had gone home for the summer at the time of Johnson's visit, he still immersed six of those who were still there! So President Campbell was moved to write:

> The great secret of brother Johnson's great success, is his evident sincerity, honesty, and great earnestness-gifts of transcendent value, superadded to good sense and a clear perception of the gospel facts, arguments, precepts, and promises, and a plain, clear, and emphatic expression of them in a familiar and intelligible style. (Mill, Harb. 1846, p. 477)

We shall see in this study that John T. Johnson's role in the Restoration Movement was significant, first of all, due to his unusual powers as an evangelist. He was probably the most successful induction officer for God's kingdom of any man in Disciple history. Even though he worked in virgin fields and where the cause of Restoration suffered so much hardship and opposition, he still enlisted upward of 600 souls annually for a period of 25 years. The story of his work should help us to recover our passion for lost souls and to regain our understanding as to the nature of evangelistic work.

He is also important because of his contribution to the unity achieved, first in Kentucky and then throughout the brotherhood, between the "Christians" (Stoneites) and the Reformers (Campbellites). Had it not been for this union which presented the Disciples to the world as a united people, the Movement would never have gotten off the ground, and had it not been for John T. Johnson the union would hardly have been possible, as we shall see.

His role is also significant due to the many other pioneer preachers with whom he worked. There was old Jacob Creath, Sr., who was pastor of the Baptist church where Johnson was a member. Johnson was present when Creath made his defense to the elders for his leanings toward Campbellism, which helped to turn Johnson in the same direction. There was Barton W. Stone with whom our evangelist served as an editor and with whom he worked for unity with the Reformers.

Benjamin Franklin is another. The evangelist served with him as an editor of the *Monthly Review.* Franklin once wrote of him: "No man that we ever saw was better calculated to inspire confidence and hope in all around him." He also worked with James Shannon, the president of Bacon College, the Movement's first institution of learning. He also labored with John and Samuel Rogers (brothers), who were successful evangelists in Kentucky also, and who helped to effect the union between Stone and Campbell.

There was Dr. L. L. Pinkerton, who might be called the first *liberal* in our Movement. He ministered to the congregation at Lexington, which had one of the finest buildings in the brotherhood in 1842. Johnson not only preached with him, but assisted him in establishing a school for girls at Midway, Ky. "Racoon" John Smith is another Kentuckian, who, like Johnson, was a Baptist that turned Campbellite. He too, was instrumental in uniting the forces of Stone and Campbell. He and Johnson labored together in planting many churches throughout Kentucky. Like Johnson, Smith was one of the reasons behind the Campbell-Rice Debate.

John A. Gano, immersed by Stone and a frequent companion of Campbell for forty years, was another able Kentucky evangelist, having turned to the Lord from a career in law after a brush with death. He and Johnson conducted many meetings together, and the letters between them is an important source of information on the life of Johnson.

T. M. Allen and B. F. Hall are others, both of whom were won by Campbell's writings, which circulated widely in Kentucky. They were frequent laborers with Johnson. So were James Henshall and R. C. Rice, important names in the history of Kentucky Disciples. Carroll Kendrick was another. Arthur Crihfield was editor of the *Christian Journal,* the Movement's first paper in Kentucky. Our evangelist often wrote to him, sending reports of his labors to the journal. Even J. B. Ferguson, the dashing young preacher of Nashville who became enamored with "spiritualism," was touched by the influence of Johnson. Though they never met, they were in frequent communication. One is moved to read Johnson's letter to Campbell in which loving concern is expressed for the promising young minister, whose editorial speculations on the state of the dead was of no little worry to the leader of the Movement. Johnson feared that Ferguson was giving the enemy an occasion.

Important names in Disciple history continue to pass unendingly in the life of Johnson. J. W. McGarvey was with him when he died and later wrote an account of his last days. Judson Barclay, our first missionary, said of him: "There is so much honesty in his face and earnestness in this manner, that, hold what opinion you may, while *he* is preaching, you feel yourself concluding: 'Well, I reckon it must be about as he says --- you never think of debating anything with that honest face and earnest man.'"

While the sources for our study of the Evangelist of Kentucky are limited, they are revealing. The most important is *The Biography of John T. Johnson* by John Rogers, published by the author in 1861. Measured by literary standards, it is a poor biography, being mostly a compilation of letters appearing in the brotherhood journals of this time, especially Johnson's reports to Campbell for the *Millennial Harbinger.* While our evangelist did not do much writing, we do have some things from him in Stone's *Christian Evangelist,* Franklin's *Monthly Review,* and the *Christian Journal,* edited by Arthur Crihfield, Carroll Kendrick and others.

Besides serving with Elder Ben Franklin as an editor of the *Monthly Review* for a short while, Johnson served briefly and spasmodically as co-editor of four other papers: *Gospel Advocate*, 1835-1836 with B. H. Hall in Georgetown, Ky. (not the same paper as the current *Gospel Advocate); Christian Messenger,* 1832-1834, with Barton W. Stone, also of Georgetown, Ky. (Johnson withdrew as co-editor when Stone moved the paper with him to Jacksonville, Illinois); *The Christian*, 1837, with Walter Scott in Georgetown, Ky.; and *The Christian Preacher,* 1838, with D. S. Burnett, also in Georgetown, Ky.

It is interesting to note that Johnson and Stone identified themselves on the masthead of their journal as "Elders of the Church of Christ," which must be one of the very earliest, if not the earliest, definitive use of "Church of Christ" in our history.

While in all these papers Johnson did some writing, it is not extensive. They are nonetheless important sources in the study of his life. He wrote more in the old *Gospel Advocate* than in any of the others.

Robert Richardson's *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* has a half dozen references to Johnson, and of course the *Millennial Harbinger,* with its many reports from Johnson, is the most reliable and rewarding source of all.

FROM CONGRESS TO THE PULPIT

Our subject was Kentucky born, arriving in this world on October 5, 1788, near Georgetown, which was to be his home throughout his busy evangelistic career. His parents were Virginians by birth, a fact that he relates to Alexander Campbell with apparent pride. His paternal grandfather had come from England. Both his father and grandfather were military men of some distinction, and he himself became a major in the United States Army. Even after he became an evangelist a number of brethren continued to call him "Major Johnson." His brother, Richard M. Johnson, was Vice-President of the United States under Martin Van Buren, 1837-1841.

Educated at Transylvania University, he was admitted to the bar when only 21. He was married two years later to 15-year-old Sophia Lewis, and settled on a Georgetown farm until he volunteered for the War of 1812. He was an aide to General Harrison, who later became president, and had such experiences as having his horse shot out from under him. He himself was also shot while standing ---but a few feet from the general. General Harrison was cognizant of his heroism and once spoke to him about the incident of having his horse killed from under him. He returned from the war a sick man and almost died of the fever.

In 1815 he was elected to Kentucky state legislature and was reelected every year thereafter until 1819. By this time his real estate holdings had increased so that he enjoyed a measure of wealth, but he lost all he had, which *then* amounted to $50,000, in the finan-

cial crisis of 1819, not because of his own debts, but for the debts of others whose notes he had signed.

In 1820 he was elected to the Congress of the United States, and he was reelected in 1822. The most important vote he cast as a legislator, he says, was the one for Andrew Jackson as president, the election that year being decided by the House of Representatives since the popular election was not decisive. Since Jackson was the people's choice, Congressman Johnson passed by Kentucky-favorite Henry Clay to become one of the four legislators whose votes proved decisive for Jackson. "It was one of the proudest acts of my life," he said. To him it was a matter of whether the people could be trusted. He was returned to congress in 1828 for still another term, after which he withdrew from political life in preference for quiet farm life and practice at the bar.

Mention has been made of Jacob Creath's judgment before the tribunal of the Baptist Church where Major Johnson was a member. The Major was won over to what was called Campbellism:

> The public mind was much excited in regard to what was vulgarly called Campbellism, and I resolved to examine it in the light of the Bible. I was won over, and contended for it with all my might in the private circle. I was astonished at the ignorance and perversity of learned men who were reputed pious and otherwise esteemed honorable. My eyes were opened and I was made perfectly free by the truth. And the debt of gratitude I owe to that man of God, Alexander Campbell, no language can tell. (Richardson, Memoirs, p. 381)

He then set out to reform his own congregation at Cross Creek, Ky., his birthplace, and being met with the same opposition that Jacob Creath had to face, he withdrew himself with certain others and started a congregation based upon primitive Christianity. At this time he immersed his wife, his first convert, a brother of his and his wife. From that moment on he gave his life to evangelism, giving up a lucrative practice in law which he had followed since retiring from Congress.

There is no indication that Major Johnson was baptized again. This conforms to his own practice as an evangelist, for there is no evidence that he ever re-immersed a Baptist. Such was also the practice of the pioneers generally. It would be interesting to ascertain just when any group in discipledom began to insist on the reimmersion of the Baptists. Probably it was not until the 1880's, for it is then that the "Church of Christ" group began to debate the issue in the *Gospel Advocate* and the *Firm Foundation.*

Johnson's reports on his evangelistic results indicate that he accepted the Baptists as Christians:

> For five days we labored hard twice each day publicly; also from house to house. Two volunteered from the world, and four worthy members united from the Baptists . . . (Mill. Harb. 1841, p. 210)

> The result of the meeting was 25 additions; of these 18 were from the world, one from the Baptists, and six of the brethren living in the vicinity. (Rogers, Biography, p. 253)

Another interesting report from Johnson, found in the *Gospel Advocate* of 1835, which he edited for one year along with B. H. Hall, reads quite unlike the reports we would expect to find in the more recent *Gospel Advocate.*

> We had the unspeakable pleasure of receiving four persons among the King's friends. One was an aged, most respectable and intelligent leader of the Methodist congregation, who had been previously immersed. Two females of the same sect united with us and were immersed. (p. 106)

This conforms to a report by another evangelist, Henry Thomas, on the same page of the *Harbinger* with one from Johnson:

> Within the last three months I have had the happiness to baptize 77 believers, and receive 5 from the Baptists, 3 from the Methodists, 1 from the Presbyterians, and 2 restored. (Mill. Harb. 1842, p. 322)

Evangelist Thomas, like Major Johnson, accepted Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians who had *already* been immersed. It would be difficult to find a case of re-immersion of one who was already an immersed believer in all the annals of early Disciple history. So adamant was Alexander Campbell on this point that he wrote: "The only thing which can justify re-immersion into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is a confession on the part of the candidate that he did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God." *(Mill. Harb.* 1836, p. 63)

By this time John T. Johnson was 43 years old, the same age as Alexander Campbell incidentally, and it was a rather late hour to venture out into the evangelistic field on sheer faith that God would supply his needs. Other evangelists his age had many years of experience behind them and were much better established. But for the next 25 years the reputation of "the Evangelist of Kentucky" was to shine brightly in discipledom. He had moved from the halls of Congress to the work of an evangelist.

THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST

As much as any man in our history John T. Johnson understood the force of Paul's injunction to Timothy: "Do the work of an evangelist." Though he did not preach what we now call *sermons,* his witness for the Christ was so warm, clear, and forceful that his success was phenomenal. With the open Bible in one hand he would work his way through the subject at hand, which may not have been well organized, but which always pointed to the Christ as Lord. Being a man of the Spirit there was much fervor in his testimony, and it was difficult for the worldly-minded to hear him without becoming disturbed.

The common denominator in the several descriptions of his preaching is reference to his great fervor. C. B. Tharp, in a letter to Alexander Campbell tried to explain the evangelist's unusual powers in such terms as forceful vigorous, and "he speaks with great earnestness." Tharp added: "His praise is in all the churches." (Roger, *Biography,* p. 306) Even at age 62 he continued to speak with the vigor of a man of thirty. Those who have written of his evangelistic zeal certainly describe him as no "hands in pocket" preacher. His message was vital and he proclaimed it with a sense of urgency.

In his preaching he spoke often of the salvation of man as it developed, through the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian eras. He drew lessons from the types and shadows of the Old Testament scriptures. To him there was on great question in any age of the world: *Will you choose God as your Rule or the Devil?* This question he drove home to his audiences over and over again. "Will you serve God and live forever, or serve the Devil and perish everlastingly? Oh, let the goodness of God lead you to repentance --- the dying love of the Saviour reconcile you to God!"

In a letter to Elder Franklin he gave his views on austerity as the mean: of settling difficulties; "Some seem to imagine that tight-lacing and a rigid discipline would heal all the difficulties that beset us. What a grand mistake!' He goes on to give his prescription for a sick church:

> A self-sacrificing disposition on the part of preachers and people is indispensable. Personal piety and devotion, springing from a heart leavened by the gospel, need not much tight lacing, watching or rigid discipline. A fatherly watch and care on the part of shepherds of the flock are needed. A visiting of the families, urging them into family worship, alluring the members to the regular meetings on the Lord's day --- at prayer meetings and Bible classes . . . (Rogers, p. 357)

Whether it was the proclamation of Jesus to a lost world or the edification of a young and awkward Restoration Movement, the role of John T. Johnson was significant. It is said of him that he probably did more public preaching within the ten busiest years of his life than any man in history. One of his friends calculated that the evangelist averaged one public discourse a day for a period of 25 years. His reports from the field, most of which are published in *Millennial Harbinger,* suggests that he must have immersed something like 400 to 500 souls annually throughout his long ministry. He reported over 500 additions for 1839 (Rogers, p. 147), which appears to be typical of his success.

Excerpts lifted at random from his many reports in Campbell's journal will indicate both his busy schedule and his success in reaching souls for the Christ.

> I have recently taken two excursions in the cause of the Lord . . . 17 additions . . . The harvest is ripe and much good can be done by continual effort; but incessant labor and toil is indispensable to success. (Mill. Harb. 12, 439)

I have just reached home from a trip of 19 days. I had the assistance of brother A. Kendrick at Harrodsburg where we gained 20 additions . . . I then made my way to Louisville . . . fortunate to gain 28 additions . . . May the Lord bless the efforts of all the holy brethren in this best of all causes . . . (Mill. Harb. 13, p. 40)

I have just returned from a trip to May's Lick and Minerva, where I labored for 19 days. . . 32 additions. . . The sects tremble and shut their doors; but there are some noble spirits amongst them, like the Bereans of old, who will hear and examine for themselves. (Mill. Harb. 13, 142)

For the last two weeks I have been engaged in Henry and Shelby counties in conjunction with brother R. C. Rice.

We established a congregation of about forty members six miles southwest of New Castle and gained five valuable additions . . . The times call for all our powers if we would succeed as formerly. The brethren are arming for the contest, and we pray the Lord that a victory worthy of so great and good a cause may be the result. (Mill. Harb. 15, p. 334)

Our meeting has progressed most gloriously. We had four confessions last night, making thirteen up to this time. This morning brother Ricketts buried those four by baptism, and raised them to walk in newness of life. What a delightful picture it was! . . .

The morning light begins to appear, and I do look for a great harvest if we labor faithfully. I feel the spirit of evangelizing burning within me . . . I pray the Lord that the churches may awake in all their strength and put forth their energies for the conversion of the world! (Mill. Harb. 16, p. 140)

"I feel the spirit of evangelizing burning within me!" aptly represents the zeal of this unusual man. He himself estimated that the disciples in Kentucky numbered 30,000 by 1840. There were upward of 200,000 altogether. Johnson's success, in other states (especially Virginia) as well as Kentucky, is one major cause of this rapid growth.

In the *Biography* John Rogers attempts a running account of the evangelist's accessions in the field. A few at random run as follows, which originally appeared in different journals.

New Albany and Charlestown (Indiana) . . . 30 accessions to the good of the Lord.

Within seven days we gained 77 additions to the cause of heaven and heaven's King. It was a most glorious victory. . .

We gained 14 during the meeting, making 71 in all at this place, and 30 at Republican (Kentucky).

Brother Thomas Smith and myself started in the rain and reached Hopkinsville in six days through wind, rain and heat. On Lord's day morning we commenced operations and labored four days. Thence to Elkton, 20 miles this way, where we labored four days. Thence ten miles above Russelville, two days in the rain. Thence at Bowling Green, three and a half days.

> Thence at Smith's Grove, near brother Ford's, three days. Thence at Glasgow, nine days. We had a glorious time ! We gathered 129 noble additions to the great cause, and in several places we left matters in 100% better condition . . .
>
> Brother Gano and myself have just closed a protracted meeting at Mayslick of seven days with brother Ricketts their evangelist. We gained 81 additions to the joy and astonishment of all. It seemed as if every person was prepared to bow to the Lord. We gained several Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists. Indeed, I expect a union with the majority of the Baptists at this place within a few weeks . . .
>
> I have just returned from a visit to Jeffersonville, opposite the city of Louisville . . . Fifty additions were made . . . The Methodists kept up an opposition meeting during the time we were there; but it was of no avail --- the people would hear. The pillars of the sects are tottering in that city.
>
> Brother Gano and myself reached here last Friday night (Mt. Sterling, Ky.) and commenced operations . . . Up to last night we have had 52 most excellent additions.
>
> Report from Arkansas: Visits Little Rock, Van Buren, Fayetteville and Clarksville. Organizes a church at Fayetteville, composed of some 50 members --- among which were 4 lawyers, one physician, and one distinguished preacher from the Presbyterians; organized a church at Oakland with some 40 members --- the whole neighborhood being with us in sentiment and feeling.

No wonder that Alexander Campbell reportedly said something like "Give me a few men like John T. Johnson and we" convert the world." I have not yet, however, been able to find that exact reference. We can also agree that the artist who painted the gallery of pioneer preachers, which is on display at our Historical Society in Nashville, placed John T. Johnson in proper setting. The artist has Thomas Campbell serving the Lord's Supper, which is apropos. Alexander Campbell, Robert Richardson, and Walter Scott are standing in a central place before an open Bible. The bearded Isaac Errett and W. K. Pendleton also have conspicuous places. In the background are scores of other pioneers, each of which is so well characterized as to be identified. But where does the artist put John T. Johnson? He stands in the most prominent place of all, out in front of the entire gallery of nobles. He is baptizing!

ORDINATION AND LAYING ON OF HANDS

In an 1844 report to the *Millennial Harbinger* Major Johnson refers to a service in Athens, Tenn., in which two elders, one deacon, and an evangelist were ordained to their respective offices. "Having been selected by the congregation, they were most solemnly ordained by fasting, prayer, and the imposition of hands.

Campbell and Johnson, as leaders of a new reformatory movement, were plagued by negative and troublesome men who sought to impose themselves upon the churches as public preachers worthy of support. In a letter to Campbell the evangelist pointed to the need to adhere more rigidly to the instructions of the apostles in selecting and ordaining evangelists. He told Campbell that it is a misunderstanding of the Christian religion for one to travel over the country as an evangelist without authority from a congregation. He insisted that such a one should be sent home.

He went on to say: "The evangelist should feel it his indispensable duty to have his letters of credit and authority always at command; and he should never approach a strange neighborhood without producing them."

Campbell had expressed similar views only a few years earlier. His suggestion for handling those who "run wholly unsent and uncalled" is to let them alone, for "they will soon find their level in society."

To one inquirer who had unfortunate experiences with freelance preachers Campbell explained: "These comets of which you speak belong not to our system . . . Our system is not a system of comets, or wandering stars, though one or two may now and then appear amidst the regular planets as omens of what may be expected should we depart from the ancient order of things." *(Mill. Harb.,* 3, p. 502)

He perhaps overstated himself when he went on to say: "All who act for our societies, either within them or abroad, have the suffrage of the society. This is our fixed and well defined rule . . ." This was perhaps the intended policy, but the fragmented character of the new movement made it impossible. Johnson's concern for *authorized* agents indicates that five years after Campbell's reassuring words a number of men continued to work as unsent, unauthorized, unordained, and perhaps even *unwanted.* This poses a real problem for all students of the ancient order. *How are the thousands of disciple congregations to control their public functionaries with their present loosely constructed organization?*

COOPERATION

The question of cooperation among churches, and the necessary organization to make such possible, has been perhaps the most gnawing problem in the Campbell movement almost since its inception. Even today both major wings of discipledom are dividing or have already divided over this issue. This makes it interesting to go back into our early history to see what practices then prevailed. We must at the very outset concede that the subject of this study was a pronounced cooperative.

For a number of years he was sustained in the field by a cooperation of churches (at least three), with his home church of Georgetown, Ky., serving as a kind of sponsoring church. The officers of that congregation issued the following public statement in Campbell's journal:

> The congregations of the Lord in Georgetown, at Hebron, and Dry Run, have made arrangements to have the gospel preached in destitute places, and it is hoped and expected that the other churches in the country will cooperate in this benevolent evangelistic enterprise. We have already raised several hundred dollars for this purpose, and the brethren seem resolved to act worthy of the high profession which they have made.
>
> The general plan is as follows: The fund is raised and committed to the Officers of the congregation. These Officers are to and make all necessary arrangements for the expenditure agreeable to the design of the donors. Reports to be submitted regularly to the respective congregations, setting forth the manner in which the fund has been expended.
>
> On the 1st of January, 1842, we commenced operations. We selected brother J. T. Johnson for the first mission. . . (Mill. Harb. 13, p. 90)

On the day after Christmas of that year the major wrote the following to Alexander Campbell:

"I have closed my labors as an evangelist for the present year, and have reported to the churches composing the cooperation in this county, 582 additions as the result of their benevolent enterprise." *(Biography,* p. 191)

Johnson explained one interesting phase of the financial structure of the cooperation: "Whatever is received by the evangelist is deposited in the evangelistical fund, subject to the appropriation of the congregations to advance the general cause." *(Biography,* p. 193)

In a description of Johnson's financial situation through biographer shows why the cooperation idea was acceptable to especially to the evangelists;

> J. T. Johnson was a most benevolent, unselfish, generous-hearted, self-sacrificing man, as all who knew him, will attest. For many years he labored without fee or reward; but his slender means forbade that he should continue that course. He could not think of confining his labors to a few churches; he felt it to be his duty, as I have no doubt it was, to occupy a wider field. In the main, he was very liberally sustained; but occasionally he was shamefully neglected. (Biography, p. 163)

Even though Johnson was perhaps the most sought after evangelist in the field, support was still a problem to him as it is to every preacher who does not choose to preach *for* those that have the money. The subject of evangelistic support also concerned him because of the woeful neglect of his co-laborers. "We should say something definite in regard to the support of evangelists," he wrote to Campbell. "I am convinced that the people would do their duty if it were distinctly marked out and the appeal were made to them. I am of the opinion that the evangelists have been making the sacrifice instead of the congregations."

He went on to express what every evangelist must feel: "After supporting his family as decently as those in comfortable circumstances, he should have a few hundred dollars more to lay up for his wife and children, in case of his sickness or death; for you know the matter generally ends at sickness or death."

As we have said, cooperative efforts have always had difficulty among our people. Johnson made some effort to defend these efforts when they were questioned in the various journals. His main point was that the work must be done, so let us be at it. There is too much talk, not enough action. He quieted some opposition by asking how congregations would fare should they be summoned by the Lord next July 4 to give an account of what they had done in two grand items: *the distribution of the Bible and in sustaining evangelists.*

Aware of the danger of going beyond the authority of God's word, he was cautious in *pointing* out that a cooperation of churches or a central fund for evangelistic support did no violence to the scriptures. He too, of course, opposed ecclesiastical councils and confederations. He thought all such was avoided so long as each cooperating church was *free* to participate or not participate, and when each church had a voice in the decisions made. As for the control of the evangelist in the field, he was always responsible to the congregation where he held membership, the one whose letter he carried, and not to the cooperative agency. The evangelist was, however, supported by the agency and made reports to it.

Admittedly, Johnson saw the fields that were white unto harvest more clearly than the fine points of argument. He wanted action! "I am firmly convinced that there is more written than is profitable, and a vast deficiency in action." (*Biography*, p. 269)

These reports that the evangelists would make to the cooperation had one very interesting aspect, the various designations used in referring to the churches: "To the Congregations of Disciples . . ." began one report. Another read "To the Congregations of Christ . . ."

RELATIONS WITH ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

There can be no question about the great admiration that Johnson had for Alexander Campbell. The church today could use more of the kindly words on the part of its leaders that Johnson used towards Campbell in the following letter:

> Many ungodly preachers and professors are endeavoring to prevent the holy alliance and union of the brotherhood into one glorious family on earth. But their efforts are as imbecile as the roarings and dashings of the mighty surges of the ocean against the rocks of Gibraltar.
>
> Some of them seem to hate Alexander Campbell with a hatred that should only be directed against the arch fiend of the lower regions. But all their envenomed shafts fall harmless at his feet. His piety, his goodness, and his greatness, will be properly appreciated by the good and

> great of succeeding generations. And his fame will stand like the pyramids of Egypt, defying the assaults of all his opposers, and even the destructive power of time. (Biography, p. 236)

In one of his reports to the cooperation of churches he urged that the brethren "unite and send brother Campbell on a mission to England; and during the trip he could select a valuable library for Bethany College." *(Mill. Harb.* 14, p. 377) Johnson had a missionary concern for Europe, often referring to its need of the gospel. He believed Campbell could do for Europe what he had done for America.

It is understandable, therefore, why Johnson was so elated when the *Millennial Harbinger* enjoyed such influence in England as to be published in a British edition. Speaking of this, Johnson wrote as follows by way of rebuking the unfriendly critics of Campbell:

> . . . while he is slandered by his opponents in this country, he has a source of high gratification in being recognized and addressed in the most affectionate terms as a brother by one of the most distinguished and pious men in any country, to-wit: the beloved William Jones of London. Added to this, brother Jones is new publishing a Millennial Harbinger in England. and giving circulation to brother Campbell's writings. Ah! envy, green-eyed envy . . . (Gospel Advocate, 1836, p. 3)

Throughout this period of the Restoration Movement there was a question about Campbell's position on the Holy Spirit. In 1843 he debated the work of the Spirit in conversion of the sinner with N. L. Rice, a Presbyterian. Even after this extended presentation of his views on the Spirit, Campbell's position was still identified as essentially that of the Baptists. It disturbed Johnson that some considered the debate as a mere "war of words without a substantial disagreement. This led him to write: "How a person possessing discriminating powers of mind could come to such a conclusion is astonishing to me. If I understand the matter, they were and are as wide apart as the poles." He went on to urge Editor Kendrick of the *Christian Journal* to run parallel columns of Baptist doctrine on the Spirit and Campbell's, so that people could see the difference. It seems that he felt obligated to defend Campbell.

> For myself, I can most unhesitatingly say that one of the chief excellencies of brother Campbell is that he possesses, in a most eminent degree, discriminating powers of mind. And this is one of the very reasons why he refused to notice many things in the discussion (with Rice), If ever gigantic powers of mind were exhibited, they were manifested by Alexander Campbell in that discussion in Lexington. The debate will hand his name down to posterity as one of God's most gifted sons. His goodness and his greatness will outlive all the malice of his enemies. His fame defies the insidious attacks of envy. And the mighty work he has accomplished will constitute one of the greenest spots in the world's history, when his opponents are dead and forgotten. (Biography, p. 241)

That he felt indebted to Campbell for bringing him to truth is obvious. In a letter from Van Buren, Ark., in 1848 he wrote to the Sage of Bethany as follows: “Thank the Lord that your writings ever fell in my way! I shall ever feel the debt of gratitude that you taught me how to read the Bible, the book of the Lord. It imparts to me a happiness that no language can tell.” *(Biography,* p. 277)

In a letter to Campbell just after his return from Europe, during which time he lost his promising young son, Wycliffe, the evangelist wrote as follows: “Oh, that I could see you and sympathize with you in your afflictions, and hear you recount your tour over the ocean and back again to the field of your labors of love. In America your triumphs are recorded and your riches are in the heavens! Oh! how many of your beloved ones are there!” *(Biography,* p. 286)

Campbell made far more trips to Johnson’s native Kentucky than anywhere else, going there perhaps as many as 70 or 80 times during his ministry. Johnson often called upon him for special work. In 1850 he wrote to him: “We more than half claim you in Kentucky, and I think it is your duty to be there.” *(Mill. Harb.* 21, p. 239) As Campbell grew older he wrote to him: “As life is precarious, I would urge you, brother Campbell, to complete your labors as soon as possible, in furnishing the mean of a faithful and perspicuous translation of the Bible, for I am persuaded that no man or set of men, can furnish such an one, unless they perfectly understand the *genius* and *spirit* of the Christian religion.” *(Mill. Harb.* 23, p. 113)

Even though Johnson failed by a decade to live as long as Campbell, he seems to have felt obligated to eulogize the Reformer as they both grew older. In a speech before the Revision Association a short time before his death in 1856, the evangelist said of Campbell:

> And I trust it will not be considered indelicate or out of place to name Alexander Campbell as one of those distinguished pioneers of this century, who risked all that was dear to him of worldly interest at a most perilous crisis. His life and labors are on record here and in heaven. Snarlers may snarl, infidels may gnash their teeth, false professors may defame, and the envious may scowl at him with green-eyed hate and malice; he stands erect, and as firm as the Rock of Gibraltar, defying Ocean’s foaming, dashing billows. He is on the rock. (Biography. p. 400)

Campbell reciprocated these kindly feelings toward Johnson, but he was most impressed with his ability as an evangelist. There is almost a sense of awe towards Johnson’s ability in the field. He did not often use the superlatives that he did in speaking of Johnson. He described him as “one of the most laborious, useful, exemplary and successful evangelists in America.” *(Biography,* p. 298) We have already noted that he considered “sincerity, honesty, and great earnestness” as the secret of his success.

Not the least of their work together was the *Christian Hymn Book,* which went through many editions and circulated widely among the Disciples. My own copy of this hymnal is the fifth edition (1856). The fly-leaf reads in part: “Compiled by A. Campbell, W. Scott, B. W. Stone, and J. T. Johnson. Elders of the Christian Church.”

Another interesting collaboration was one of the very first “unity meetings” conducted by our people. In a note to Campbell in 1841 the evangelist said: “When do you visit Kentucky? And will you spend any time with us here? Oh! that we could have a meeting to discuss the principles of Union, and give public notice for all parties to attend! the meeting to be conducted in all good feeling, free from all harsh remark. Incalculable good might be the result. A week or two spent in this way would give an impetus to the cause never to be forgotten. Think of this, and take such course as your judgment may approve.” *(Mill. Harb.* 12, p. 92)

Campbell published the note with this attending promise: “Your motion is an excellent one; and I will travel 100 miles out of my way to attend such a meeting in Kentucky on my return from Nashville the ensuing Spring.”

The meeting was conducted in Lexington in April of 1841 and *it* attracted a very large audience, including representatives from several sects, especially Baptists. The influential Elder W. F. Broddus, almost a lifetime antagonist of Campbell, issued an edict that the Kentucky Baptists were not to attend the unity meeting, though he himself attended! The meeting was an open one with anyone free to speak and criticize. Broddus was invited to say what he would, but he chose to be what Campbell called “a silent spectator.” Campbell later wrote that he hoped Broddus might experience what Goldsmith spoke of-”some who came to laugh remain’d to pray” --- but he remained critical of the effort, even by pen following the sessions. So the meeting had its repercussions in the press, including Campbell’s journal.

One noteworthy resolution was passed by this union meeting which we of today might give pause to consider in view of our own divisions:

Resolved, That the union of Christians can be scripturally effected by requiring a practical acknowledgment of such articles of belief and such rules of piety and morality as are admitted by all Christian denominations.

In a recent conversation in Nashville with Eva Jean Wrather, who is perhaps our greatest authority on the life of Alexander Campbell, the question was raised as to when and where Campbell and Johnson first met. Miss Wrather suggested that it might have been when Johnson was in Congress. I have since found documentation to support her position.

In the 1857 *Millennial Harbinger* an account is given of Johnson’s death. In this connection Campbell relates his first meeting with Johnson:

> I cannot now give the precise date of my first introduction to Elder J. T. Johnson. I had the pleasure of forming his acquaintance when a Baptist. On dining with him at his own house, whilst he was a Member of Congress, in company with some gentlemen of the Bar, and other friends, I was most favorably impressed with his manner of giving thanks at the table, and the spirit of piety and devotion exhibited on the occasion. *(Mill. Harb.* 28, p. 109)

He goes on to tell how two years later he was urged by Johnson to deliver a discourse in Georgetown. He was still engaged at the Bar, but Campbell was impressed with his "concentrated and deeply interested attention." After the discourse he invited Johnson to walk with him in the yard around the meetinghouse. "Brother Johnson, you are aware that the Baptists are occasionally wont to say that they sometimes 'feel a deep and solemn impression on their minds.' *I now feel such an impression on my mind, and it is concerning not myself, but you."* Campbell said to him as they paused in the churchyard.

They were quiet for a moment. Then Johnson said, "And what is it?" Campbell measured the man with his piercing eyes and said, "*It is that you should abandon politics and the law, and go and preach the gospel."*

Campbell goes on to say: "A solemn pause ensued. He broke silence by saying something of his feelings and desires, which I cannot state; but concluded, saying, 'I will promise you that I will give to the subject a grave and solemn reflection, and will respond to you again'."

Campbell goes on to explain how he passed through Georgetown a few months afterwards and inquired of the brethren how things were going. A brother Bryan replied: "Nothing remarkable, save that John T. Johnson has given up politics and is now preaching the gospel."

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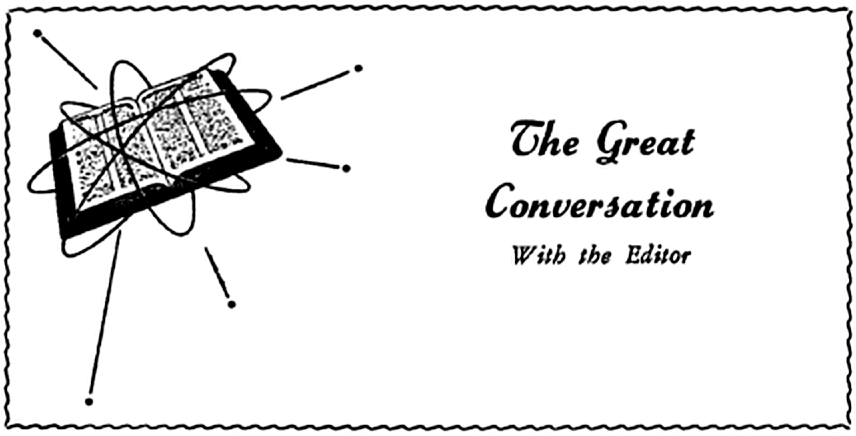

ALONGSIDE LAKE GUNTERSVILLE

At this writing I am ensconced in a comfortable little cabin alongside beautiful Lake Guntersville in North Alabama. The Redstone Arsenal, where they make the spaceships for Glenn and Carpenter, is only 25 miles away. The thousands of acres of waters that run through these many hills, which from an airplane must look like spilled blue ink upon a carpet of green, is part of the TVA system. The Guntersville dam, one of a dozen or so, is just around the bend from our cabin.

This is the first *real* vacation I have ever given my family. The four of us enjoy swimming, boating, hiking, picnicking, sunbathing, and even skiing. The last activity is presently, however, restricted to me. The others make gallant efforts to ride the waves, but have not succeeded as yet. Phoebe takes to water like a duck, and if she had her way, which is often the case, she'd be in the lake all the time. Little Benjy has had his third birthday while we are here; he too likes the water so long as he can hold to a firm hand.

Let's call this a *working* vacation. Along with writing an issue of *Restoration Review,* I have been in a study and gospel meeting at Grassy congregation near Arab. My many friends in these parts are of long standing. I started 14 years ago in Christian work in Marshall county, and I suppose I have had 20 different assignments since then, including upward of a dozen tent meetings in all corners of the county. The beloved G. A. Dunn introduced me to this area. Some of the experiences through the years have been stormy, including some rather lively debates with ministers of several persuasions. I once had my life threatened, but we'll not go into that.

This part of the South is not only close to my heart because of the experiences I have had here, including the cherished memories of immersing scores of believers in these warm waters of Lake Guntersville and ponds all over the county, but also because my dear old Dad had experiences here when he was a boy. I remember him telling me how he once shot a panther on nearby Sand Mountain. For years a picture of that mountain hung on a wall in my parents' home with an arrow penciled in by my father, marking the place where

the panther fell dead. My paternal grandmother was from these parts. She was a Berry, and I notice that the Berrys are as thick as the berries in these old hills. So, you see, I am kin to these folk!

I have of course done some changing (or growing?) in these 14 years, which the good Lord knows was needed. Many people think I still have a lot of changing to do, or else just crawl off somewhere and die, and they might be right. Some of my friends have become more liberal along with me; many have not. Congregations where I once held meetings will not now even announce my services elsewhere. One brother asked the leaders of his congregation to announce my study at Grassy, explaining that "Brother Garrett brought Christ to my family, so maybe he can do the same for someone else." But the request could not be granted. I no longer belong to the party. We get a few indirect solicitations when the preachers will tell their members *not* to attend. One visiting evangelist at a nearby rural congregation where I have conducted meetings has for years been unduly sensitive about Leroy Garrett. Years ago I thought he was going to whip me, and I do mean *literally,* because of my opposition to our clerical system. My years as an editor has added to his list of grievances against me. He was a disturbed man over my being in the same county with him. Our mutual friends tell me that his temper was so violent even in the pulpit, partly because I was in the neighborhood, that they cannot afford to have him again even if he is orthodox.

One Lord's day at Grassy a visiting minister with an obscure background, whom I had neither met nor heard of, shared the platform with me as one of the speakers. After two hours of joyous Christian fellowship with all who had gathered to worship the King, the brother remarked to an old friend of mine, "Well, I'd never heard anything good about that man. . . " Then added, "Why, I had heard he was a *digressive!"* My friend took him to mean that things were not quite the way he had been told.

Needless to say that Grassy is marked as a *digressive* church. Though they still have loyal, orthodox ministers from time to time, they are nonetheless apostate from *the faith* for having digressives like me. But God has blessed them with a gracious, sweet Christian spirit due to their search for truth and freedom. They will listen to anyone. It is one of the few churches I know where *anyone* can speak so long as he is decent, and I think they are not too particular about their standard of decency!

Well, life is a joyful experience. My world extends all the way from the university classroom, faculty meetings, and educational conferences to the editor's desk, the farmer's humble home, and the country church. I thank God for every hour of it.

As for my brethren, some of whom are old friends, who do not understand me and who feel they must oppose my work, I no longer think of this as a problem. It once bothered me, but not so any longer. I see it as St. Francis once prayed: "Lord, help me to realize that

it is more important to *love* than to be loved, and more important to *understand* than to be understood."

BACK TO TEXAS!

In June of this year I moved my family back to our native state after an absence of five years. It was with reluctance that I resigned my position at Bethany College to accept a post at Texas Woman's University in Denton, for the experiences we were all having at Bethany were so very enriching. Bethany will always be a kind of shrine to me, for many great and good men who have lived there were fearless to move boldly into the world of religious ideas. It has always been a very small village, but some of the things that have happened there are as vast as the universe itself. While it is among the smallest of the thousands of (West) Virginia, it nestled and nurtured the Restoration Movement, which to my mind is the greatest thing that ever happened to our beloved country.

I must admit that it is difficult for me to stay away from Bethany. So many worthwhile things have transpired there, it seems that many more should be in the offing. Surely Bethany College is "a gem" among the small colleges of America. It has been an honor to have shared in its great history. I hope the very best for President Gresham and his fine faculty, and I especially appreciate the fact that the president is doing his best to make Bethany a college for *all* the heirs of the Restoration Movement rather than one particular segment. The college will always stand in the lengthened shadows of Alexander Campbell, and for that reason alone we should all be interested in its welfare.

Texas is of course home. Denton is a university city of 30,000 citizens and 12,000 students and is located on the fringe of the Dallas-Ft. Worth complex. We are happy to be back once more with our families and many friends. At T. W. U. I will be in business as usual, teaching philosophy to many of the 3,000 beautiful women that grace that spacious campus. Part of my assignment will be to lecture on psychological and philosophical principles to 300 student nurses. We will spend the year studying the question *What Is Man?* And all that without a man in sight except the professor! Maybe something important will happen.

I will also for the sixth year conduct a pilot course in high school philosophy under the sponsorship of Lilly Endowment and MacMurray College. Denton High School, one of the finest in the state, is the new home for this experimental project.

We are at home in a wonderful little city at 1201 Windsor Dr., not far from the T. W. U. campus. Y'all come!

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